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A Book of
MODERN VERSE

Compiled by

J. C. SMITH



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PREFACE

A Book of Verse for Boys and Girls was originally published in 1908. Recently, some of those who use it have asked me to bring it up to date by adding a selection of modern verse suited to my chosen audience. In this little volume I have tried to do so.

It is good for boys and girls to realize that English poetry is not a thing of the past. With the deaths of Arnold in 1888, of Browning in 1889, and of Tennyson in 1892, it seemed as if a great age of poetry was ended and Mr. Bridges alone was left to carry on the poetic tradition. 'But soon the circling night brought up next stars.' Mere meteors some of them, and quickly extinguished; but Mr. Kipling and Mr. Yeats shone on. Presently Mr. Binyon showed himself the authentic heir of the great English tradition; then, still in the 'nineties, came the bitter wisdom and exquisite form of *A Shropshire Lad*, the wonderful promise of Mr. Sturge Moore's *Vinedresser*, and—most remarkable of all—the discovery of a great poet in Mr. Hardy. With the new century new voices began to be heard. It was a decade old before, as I remember, Mr. Masfield startled the public to attention with *The Everlasting Mercy*, but some of his best poems were written much earlier. And who can forget the thrill with which he first heard the haunting

music of Mr. de la Mare; or Mr. Davies 'with his note so true'; or the swan-song of Flecker, dying in the East; or Mr. Hodgson's splendid paean? To the years just before the war belongs a little group of brothers-in-the-Muse—Rupert Brooke, Mr. Abercombe, and Mr. Gibson, with their American associate Mr. Frost—highly individual poets all four. And then the war came, stirring many natures to poetry that our generation can never judge of coldly. Some survived to fulfil, or not to fulfil, their promise; but who can estimate our loss in Rupert Brooke, Wilfrid Owen, Charles Sorley, Edward Thomas?

It is hard to select from contemporary poetry even for adult readers. Time is the best anthologist; without his aid one easily goes astray. Still harder is it to select for boys and girls. Much modern poetry is too subjective for them, dealing in subtleties of thought and feeling that are beyond their comprehension and outside their experience. If I have succeeded at all, it has been by adhering to the principles that guided me sixteen years ago, and admitting nothing but what was simple, concrete, impassioned, excellent in form, and 'sounding into virtue'.

Acknowledgements for leave to include copyright poems are due to Mr. Laurence Binyon for 'The Little Dancers' and 'For the Fallen', and for the latter also to the proprietors of *The Times*; to Mr. Basil Blackwell for

Mrs. Fredegond Shove's 'The New Ghost'; Mr. Robert Bridges for 'Since Maurice Died', 'London Snow', and 'There is a Hill'; Mr. R. Cobden-Sanderson for Mr. Edmund Blunden's 'The Poor Man's Pig'; Mr. W. H. Davies and Mr. Jonathan Cape for 'Leisure' from *Songs of Joy*; Messrs. Duckworth & Co. for Mr. Hilaire Belloc's 'The South Country'; Mr. Robert Frost for 'Mowing' and 'The Gum Gatherer'; Mr. W. W. Gibson and Messrs. Elkin Mathews for 'Flannan Isle' and 'The Stone', and the latter also for Maurice Hewlett's 'Night-Errantry'; Mr. Robert Graves and Mr. Martin Secker for 'Rocky Acres' from *Country Sentiment*, and the latter also for J. E. Flecker's 'War Song of the Saracens' and 'The Old Ships' from *Collected Poems*; Mr. Thomas Hardy for 'Friends Beyond', 'Weathers', and 'When I set out for Lyonesse'; the poet's family for Gerard Hopkins's 'Inversnaid'; Professor A. E. Housman and Mr. Grant Richards for 'Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries' from *Last Poems*, and the latter also for John Davidson's 'A Runnable Stag'; Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Messrs. Methuen & Co. for 'Sussex' from *The Five Nations*; Messrs. Macmillan & Co. for Mr. Ralph Hodgson's 'The Song of Honour'; Mr. Walter de la Mare for 'The Lady of the West Country', 'The Listeners', and 'Music'; Mr. John Masefield for 'Sea-Fever' and 'Cargoes'; Miss Charlotte Mew and the Poetry Bookshop for 'Exspecto Resurrectionem'; Mr. Wilfrid Meynell for Mrs. Meynell's 'Christ in the

Universe', and Francis Thompson's 'In No Strange Land'; Mr. Robert Nichols and Messrs. Chatto & Windus for 'At the Wars'; Mr. Siegfried Sassoon and Messrs. William Heinemann for 'Everyone Sang'; Messrs. Sidgwick & Jackson for 'The Soldier' from Rupert Brooke's *Collected Poems*; Professor Sorley for Charles Sorley's 'The Ungirt Runners'; Mrs. R. A. Taylor for 'The Quietist'; Mrs. Thomas for Edward Thomas's 'Adlestrop'; and Mr. W. B. Yeats and Messrs. T. Fisher Unwin for 'The Ballad of Father Gilligan' from *Poems*.

J. C. SMITH.

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War Song of the Saracens

WE are they who come faster than fate : we are they who
ride early or late :

We storm at your ivory gate : Pale Kings of the Sunset,
beware !

Not on silk nor in samet we lie, not in curtained solemnity
die

Among women who chatter and cry, and children who
mumble a prayer.

But we sleep by the ropes of the camp, and we rise with
a shout, and we tramp

With the sun or the moon for a lamp, and the spray of the
wind in our hair.

From the lands, where the elephants are, to the forts of
Merou and Balghar,

Our steel we have brought and our star to shine on the
ruins of Rum.

We have marched from the Indus to Spain, and by God
we will go there again ;

We have stood on the shore of the plain where the Waters
of Destiny boom.

A mart of destruction we made at Jalula where men were
afraid,

For death was a difficult trade, and the sword was a broker
of doom ;

And the Spear was a Desert Physician who cured not
a few of ambition,

And drave not a few to perdition with medicine bitter
and strong :

samet] rich silk.

Rum] Rome.

And the shield was a grief to the fool and as bright as
 a desolate pool,
 And as straight as the rock of Stamboul when their
 cavalry thundered along :
 For the coward was drowned with the brave when our
 battle sheered up like a wave,
 And the dead to the desert we gave, and the glory to God
 in our song.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

A Runnable Stag

WHEN the pods went pop on the broom, green broom,
 And apples began to be golden-skinned,
 We harboured a stag in the Priory coomb,
 And we feathered his trail up-wind, up-wind,
 We feathered his trail up-wind—
 A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,
 A runnable stag, a kingly crop,
 Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
 A stag, a runnable stag.

Then the huntsman's horn rang yap, yap, yap,
 And ' Forwards ' we heard the harbourer shout ;
 But 'twas only a brochet that broke a gap
 In the beechen underwood, driven out,
 From the underwood antlered out
 By warrant and might of the stag, the stag,
 The runnable stag, whose lordly mind
 Was bent on sleep, though beamed and tined
 He stood, a runnable stag.

harboured] tracked to covert. coomb] deep glen. Brow,
 bay and tray] the first, second, and third antlers. brochet] stag
 in his second year. beamed and tined] The stag's horn consists
 of a ' beam ' or stem, with ' tines ' or prongs.

Blood, water, fruit and corpses up the hold.
 But now through friendly seas they softly run,
 Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,
 Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen,
 Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn
 An image tumbled on a rose-swept bay,
 A drowsy ship of some yet older day ;
 And, wonder's breath indrawn,
 Thought I—who knows—who knows—but in that same
 (Fished up beyond Aeaea, patched up new
 —Stern painted brighter blue—)
 That talkative, bald-headed seaman came
 (Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)
 From Troy's doom-crimson shore,
 And with great lies about his wooden horse
 Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.
 It was so old a ship—who knows, who knows ?
 —And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain
 To see the mast burst open with a rose,
 And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

•The Little Dancers

LONELY, save for a few faint stars, the sky
 Dreams ; and lonely, below, the little street
 Into its gloom retires, secluded and shy.
 Scarcely the dumb roar enters this soft retreat ;
 And all is dark, save where come flooding rays
 From a tavern window ; there, to the brisk measure
 Of an organ that down in an alley merrily plays,
 Aeaea] Circe's isle. That . . . seaman] Odysseus.

Two children, all alone and no one by,
 Holding their tattered frocks, through an airy maze
 Of motion, lightly threaded with nimble feet,
 Dance sedately : face to face they gaze,
 Their eyes shining, grave with a perfect pleasure.

LAURENCE BINYON

• *Leisure*

WHAT is this life if, full of care,
 We have no time to stand and stare.
 No time to stand beneath the boughs
 And stare as long as sheep or cows.
 No time to see, when woods we pass,
 Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.
 No time to see, in broad daylight,
 Streams full of stars, like skies at night.
 No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
 And watch her feet, how they can dance.
 No time to wait till her mouth can
 Enrich that smile her eyes began.
 A poor life this if, full of care,
 We have no time to stand and stare.

W. H. DAVIES

‘ *When I set out for Lyonesse* ’

WHEN I set out for Lyonesse,
 A hundred miles away,
 The rime was on the spray,
 And starlight lit my lonesomeness
 When I set out for Lyonesse
 A hundred miles away.

What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there
No prophet durst declare,
Nor did the wisest wizard guess
What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there.

When I came back from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes,
All marked with mute surmise
My radiance rare and fathomless,
When I came back from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes !

THOMAS HARDY

An Epitaph

HERE lies a most beautiful lady,
Light of step and heart was she ;
I think she was the most beautiful lady
That ever was in the West Country.
But beauty vanishes ; beauty passes ;
However rare—rare it be ;
And when I crumble, who will remember
This lady of the West Country ?

WALTER DE LA MARE

' Since Maurice died '

I NEVER shall love the snow again
Since Maurice died :
With corniced drift it blocked the lane,
And sheeted in a desolate plain
The country side.

The trees with silvery rime bedight
 Their branches bare.
By day no sun appeared ; by night
The hidden moon shed thievish light
 In the misty air.

We fed the birds that flew around
 In flocks to be fed :
No shelter in holly or brake they found.
The speckled thrush on the frozen ground
 Lay frozen and dead.

We skated on stream and pond ; we cut
 The crinching snow
To Doric temple or Arctic hut ;
We laughed and sang at nightfall, shut
 By the fireside glow.

Yet grudged we our keen delights before
 Maurice should come.
We said, In-door or out-of-door
We shall love life for a month or more,
 When he is home.

They brought him home ; 'twas two days late
 For Christmas day :
Wrapped in white, in solemn state,
A flower in his hand, all still and straight
 Our Maurice lay.

And two days ere the year outgave
 We laid him low.
The best of us truly were not brave,
When we laid Maurice down in his grave
 Under the snow.

The Stone

'AND will you cut a stone for him,
To set above his head ?
And will you cut a stone for him—
A stone for him ?' she said.

Three days before, a splintered rock
Had struck her lover dead—
Had struck him in the quarry dead,
Where, careless of the warning call,
He loitered, while the shot was fired—
A lively stripling, brave and tall,
And sure of all his heart desired . . .
A flash, a shock,
A rumbling fall . . .
And, broken 'neath the broken rock,
A lifeless heap, with face of clay,
And still as any stone he lay,
With eyes that saw the end of all.

I went to break the news to her :
And I could hear my own heart beat
With dread of what my lips might say ,
But some poor fool had sped before ;
And, flinging wide her father's door,
Had blurted out the news to her,
And struck her lover dead for her,
Had struck the girl's heart dead in her,
Had struck life, lifeless, at a word,
And dropped it at her feet :
Then hurried on his witless way,
Scarce knowing she had heard.

And when I came, she stood alone—
A woman, turned to stone :
And, though no word at all she said,
I knew that all was known.

Because her heart was dead,
She did not sigh nor moan.
His mother wept :
She could not weep.
Her lover slept :
She could not sleep.
Three days, three nights,
She did not stir :
Three days, three nights,
Were one to her,
Who never closed her eyes
From sunset to sunrise,
From dawn to evenfall—
Her tearless, staring eyes,
That, seeing naught, saw all.

The fourth night when I came from work,
I found her at my door.
' And will you cut a stone for him ? '
She said : and spoke no more :
But followed me, as I went in,
And sank upon a chair ;
And fixed her grey eyes on my face,
With still, unseeing stare.
And, as she waited patiently,
I could not bear to feel
Those still, grey eyes that followed me,
Those eyes that plucked the heart from me,

Those eyes that sucked the breath from me
And curdled the warm blood in me,
Those eyes that cut me to the bone,
And pierced my marrow like cold steel.

And so I rose, and sought a stone ;
And cut it, smooth and square :
And, as I worked, she sat and watched,
Beside me, in her chair.
Night after night, by candlelight,
I cut her lover's name :
Night after night, so still and white,
And like a ghost she came ;
And sat beside me, in her chair,
And watched with eyes aflame.

She eyed each stroke,
And hardly stirred :
She never spoke
A single word :
And not a sound or murmur broke
The quiet, save the mallet-stroke.

With still eyes ever on my hands,
With eyes that seemed to burn my hands,
My wincing, overweared hands,
She watched, with bloodless lips apart,
And silent, indrawn breath :
And every stroke my chisel cut,
Death cut still deeper in her heart :
The two of us were chiselling,
Together, I and death.

And when at length the job was done,
 And I had laid the mallet by,
 As if, at last, her peace were won,
 She breathed his name ; and, with a sigh,
 Passed slowly through the open door :
 And never crossed my threshold more.

Next night I laboured late, alone,
 To cut her name upon the stone.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

Friends Beyond

WILLIAM DEWY, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Ledlow late at
 plough,

Robert's kin, and John's, and Ned's,
 And the Squire, and Lady Susan, lie in Mellstock church-
 yard now !

' Gone ', I call them, gone for good, that group of local
 hearts and heads ;

Yet at mothy curfew-tide,
 And at midnight when the noon-heat breathes it back
 from walls and leads,

They've a way of whispering to me—fellow-wight who
 yet abide—

In the muted, measured note
 Of a ripple under archways, or a lone cave's stillicide :

' We have triumphed : this achievement turns the bane
 to antidote,

Unsuccesses to success,
 Many thought-worn eves and morrows to a morrow free of
 thought.

Tranter] Carrier.

stillicide] fall of drops.

‘No more need we corn and clothing, feel of old terrestrial
stress ;

Chill detraction stirs no sigh ;

Fear of death has even bygone us : death gave all that we
possess.’

W. D.—‘Ye mid burn the old bass-viol that I set such
value by.’

Squire.—‘You may hold the manse in fee,

You may wed my spouse, may let my children’s memory
of me die.’

Lady S.—‘You may have my rich brocades, my laces ;
take each household key ;

Ransack coffer, desk, bureau ;

Quiz the few poor treasures hid there, con the letters
kept by me.’

Far.—‘Ye mid zell my favourite heifer, ye mid let the
charlock grow,

Foul the grinterns, give up thrift.’

Far. Wife.—‘If ye break my best blue china, children,
I shan’t care or ho.’

All.—‘We’ve no wish to hear the tidings, how the people’s
fortunes shift ;

What your daily doings are ;

Who are wedded, born, divided ; if your lives beat slow
or swift.

‘Curious not the least are we if our intents you make or
mar,

If you quire to our old tune,

If the City stage still passes, if the weirs still roar afar.’

mid] may. grinterns] compartments of a granary.
ho] heed.

—Thus, with very gods' composure, freed those crosses
late and soon

Which, in life, the Trine allow
(Why, none witteth), and ignoring all that haps beneath
the moon,

William Dewy, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Ledlow late at
plough,

Robert's kin, and John's, and Ned's,
And the Squire, and Lady Susan, murmur mildly to me
now.

THOMAS HARDY

Mowing

THERE was never a sound beside the wood but one,
And that was my long scythe whispering to the ground.
What was it it whispered? I knew not well myself;
Perhaps it was something about the heat of the sun,
Something, perhaps, about the lack of sound—
And that was why it whispered and did not speak.
It was no dream of the gift of idle hours,
Or easy gold at the hand of fay or elf:
Anything more than the truth would have seemed too
weak

To the earnest love that laid the swale in rows,
Not without feeble-pointed spikes of flowers
(Pale orchises), and scared a bright green snake.
The fact is the sweetest dream that labour knows.
My long scythe whispered and left the hay to make.

ROBERT FROST

The Gum-Gatherer

THERE overtook me and drew me in
To his down-hill, early-morning stride,
And set me five miles on my road
Better than if he had had me ride,
A man with a swinging bag for load
And half the bag wound round his hand.
We talked like barking above the din
Of water we walked along beside.
And for my telling him where I'd been
And where I lived in mountain land
To be coming home the way I was,
He told me a little about himself.
He came from higher up in the pass
Where the grist of the new-beginning brooks
Is blocks split off the mountain mass—
And hopeless grist enough it looks
Ever to grind to soil for grass.
(The way it is will do for moss.)
There he had built his stolen shack.
It had to be a stolen shack
Because of the fears of fire and loss
That trouble the sleep of lumber folk :
Visions of half the world burned black
And the sun shrunken yellow in smoke.
We know who when they come to town
Bring berries under the wagon seat,
Or a basket of eggs between their feet ;
What this man brought in a cotton sack
Was gum, the gum of the mountain spruce.
He showed me lumps of the scented stuff
Like uncut jewels, dull and rough.

It comes to market golden brown ;
But turns to pink between the teeth.

I told him this is a pleasant life
To set your breast to the bark of trees
That all your days are dim beneath,
And reaching up with a little knife,
To loose the resin and take it down
And bring it to market when you please.

ROBERT FROST

The Poor Man's Pig

ALREADY fallen plum-bloom stars the green
And apple-boughs as knarred as old toads' backs
Wear their small roses ere a rose is seen ;
The building thrush watches old Job who stacks
The bright-peeled osiers on the sunny fence,
The pent sow grunts to hear him stumping by,
And tries to push the bolt and scamper thence,
But her ringed snout still keeps her to the sty.
Then out he lets her run ; away she snorts
In bundling gallop for the cottage door,
With hungry hubbub begging crusts and orts,
Then like the whirlwind bumping round once more ;
Nuzzling the dog, making the pullets run,
And sulky as a child when her play's done.

EDMUND BLUNDEN

orts] scraps.

• Weathers

THIS is the weather the cuckoo likes,
And so do I ;
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
And nestlings fly :
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside at ' The Travellers' Rest ',
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the south and west,
And so do I.

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
And so do I ;
When beeches drip in browns and duns,
And thresh, and ply ;
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
And meadow rivulets overflow,
And drops on gate-bars hang in a row,
And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.

THOMAS HARDY

There is a Hill

THERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,
Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine :
And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems
Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.
Straight trees in every place
Their thick tops interlace,
And pendant branches trail their foliage fine
Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows :
His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade,
Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes
Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.

His winter floods lay bare

The stout roots in the air :

His summer streams are cool, when they have played
Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,
And hides it from the meadow, where in peace
The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,
Robbing the golden market of the bees :

And laden barges float

By banks of myosote ;

And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys

Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool
Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass
The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,
And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass ;

Where spreading crowfoot mars

The drowning nenuphars,

Waving the tassels of her silken grass

Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,
Not the white water-lily spoked with gold ;
Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows
On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold :

Yet should her roots but try

Within these deeps to lie,

Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold

Her waxen head so high.

myosote] forget-me-not.

nenuphars] water-lilies.

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook
Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree
Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,
Forgetting soon his pride of fishery ;

 And dreams, or falls asleep,
 While curious fishes peep
About his nibbled bait, or scornfully
 Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,
In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering care
Upon a staff propping his weary knees,
May by the pathway of the forest fare :

 As from a buried day
 Across the mind will stray
Some perishing mute shadow,—and unaware
 He passeth on his way.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,
Whether he bathe at morning in the stream :
Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe
The meadows, busy with a blurring steam ;

 Or watch, as fades the light,
 The gibbous moon grow bright,
Until her magic rays dance in a dream,
 And glorify the night.

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames ?
O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow !
O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,
No sharer of my secret I allow :

 Lest ere I come the while
 Strange feet your shades defile ;
Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow
 Within your guardian isle.

• *London Snow*

WHEN men were all asleep the snow came flying,
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,
Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town ;
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing ;
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down :

Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing ;
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.

All night it fell, and when full inches seven
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,
The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven ;

And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare :
The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness ;

The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air ;
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.

Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,
They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze
Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snowballing ;

Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees ;
Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
' O look at the trees ! ' they cried, ' O look at the trees ! '

With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,
Following along the white deserted way,
A country company long dispersed asunder :

When now already the sun, in pale display
Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below
His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.

For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow ;
And trains of sombre men, past tale of number,
Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go :

But even for them awhile no cares encumber
Their minds diverted ; the daily word is unspoken,
The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow slumber
At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm
they have broken.

ROBERT BRIDGES

Rocky Acres - Robert Graves

THIS is a wild land, country of my choice,
With harsh craggy mountain, moor ample and bare.
Seldom in these acres is heard any voice
But voice of cold water that runs here and there
Through rocks and lank heather growing) without care.
No mice in the heath run) nor no birds cry
For fear of the dark speck that floats in the sky.

He soars and he hovers rocking on his wings,
He scans his wide parish with a sharp eye,
He catches the trembling of small hidden things,
He tears them in pieces, dropping from the sky :
Tenderness and pity the land will deny,
Where life is but nourished from water and rock
A hardy adventure, full of fear and shock.

Time has never journeyed to this lost land,
Crakeberries and heather) bloom out of date,
The rocks jut, the streams flow singing on either hand,
Careless if the season be early or late.
The skies wander overhead, now blue, now slate :
Winter would be known by his cold cutting snow
If June did not borrow his armour also.

Yet this is my country beloved by me best,
 The first land that rose from Chaos and the Flood,
 Nursing no fat valleys for comfort and rest,
 Trampled by no hard hooves, stained with no blood.
 Bold immortal country whose hill tops have stood
 Strongholds for the proud gods when on earth they go,
 Terror for fat burghers in far plains below.

ROBERT GRAVES

• *Inversnaid*

THIS darksome burn, horseback brown,
 His rollrock highroad roaring down,
 In coop and in comb the fleece of his foam
 Flutes and low to the lake falls home.

A windpuff-bonnet of fawn-froth
 Turns and twindles over the broth
 Of a pool so pitchblack, fell-frowning,
 It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning.

Degged with dew, dappled with dew
 Are the groins of the braes that the brook treads through,
 Wiry heathpacks, flitches of fern,
 And the beadbonny ash that sits over the burn.

What would the world be, once bereft
 Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
 O let them be left, wildness and wet ;
 Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

GERARD M. HOPKINS

twindles] twirls Degged] wetted.

Adlestrop

YES. I remember Adlestrop—
The name, because one afternoon
Of heat the express-train drew up there
Unwontedly. It was late June.
The steam hissed. Some one cleared his throat.
No one left and no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop—only the name
And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,
No whit less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.
And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

EDWARD THOMAS

The South Country

WHEN I am living in the Midlands
That are sodden and unkind,
I light my lamp in the evening :
My work is left behind ;
And the great hills of the South Country
Come back into my mind.
The great hills of the South Country
They stand along the sea ;
And it 's there walking in the high woods
That I could wish to be,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Walking along with me.

The men that live in North England
I saw them for a day :
Their hearts are set upon the waste fells,
Their skies are fast and grey ;
From their castle-walls a man may see
The mountains far away.

The men that live in West England
They see the Severn strong,
A-rolling on rough water brown
Light aspen leaves along.
They have the secret of the Rocks,
And the oldest kind of song.

But the men that live in the South Country
Are the kindest and most wise,
They get their laughter from the loud surf,
And the faith in their happy eyes
Comes surely from our Sister the Spring
When over the sea she flies ;
The violets suddenly bloom at her feet,
She blesses us with surprise.

I never get between the pines
But I smell the Sussex air ;
Nor I never come on a belt of sand
But my home is there.
And along the sky the line of the Downs
So noble and so bare.

A lost thing could I never find,
Nor a broken thing mend :
And I fear I shall be all alone
When I get towards the end.
Who will there be to comfort me
Or who will be my friend ?

I will gather and carefully make my friends
Of the men of the Sussex Weald,
They watch the stars from silent folds,
They stiffly plough the field.
By them and the God of the South Country
My poor soul shall be healed.

If I ever become a rich man,
Or if ever I grow to be old,
I will build a house with deep thatch
To shelter me from the cold,
And there shall the Sussex songs be sung
And the story of Sussex told.

I will hold my house in the high wood
Within a walk of the sea,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Shall sit and drink with me.

HILAIRE BELLOC

Sussex

God gave all men all earth to love,
But since our hearts are small,
Ordained for each one spot should prove
Belovèd over all ;
That, as He watched Creation's birth,
So we, in godlike mood,
May of our love create our earth
And see that it is good.

So one shall Baltic pines content,
As one some Surrey glade,
Or one the palm-grove's droned lament
Before Levuka's Trade.

Levuka] one of the Fiji Islands.

Trade] Trade-wind.

Each to his choice, and I rejoice
The lot has fallen to me
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—
Yea, Sussex by the sea !

No tender-hearted garden crowns,
No bosomed woods adorn
Our blunt, bow-headed, whale-backed Downs,
But gnarled and writhen thorn—
Bare slopes where chasing shadows skim,
And, through the gaps revealed,
Belt upon belt, the wooded, dim
Blue goodness of the Weald.

Clean of officious fence or hedge,
Half-wild and wholly tame,
The wise turf cloaks the white cliff edge
As when the Romans came.
What sign of those that fought and died
At shift of sword and sword ?
The barrow and the camp abide,
The sunlight and the sward.

Here leaps ashore the full Sou'west
All heavy-winged with brine,
Here lies above the folded crest
The Channel's leaden line ;
And here the sea-fogs lap and cling,
And here, each warning each,
The sheep-bells and the ship-bells ring
Along the hidden beach.

We have no waters to delight
Our broad and brookless vales—
Only the dewpond on the height,
Unfed, that never fails—

Whereby no tattered herbage tells
Which way the season flies—
Only our close-bit thyme that smells
Like dawn in Paradise.

Here through the strong and shadeless days
The tinkling silence thrills ;
Or little, lost, Down churches praise
The Lord who made the hills :
But here the Old Gods guard their round,
And, in her secret heart,
The heathen kingdom Wilfrid found
Dreams, as she dwells, apart.

Though all the rest were all my share,
With equal soul I'd see
Her nine-and-thirty sisters fair,
Yet none more fair than she.
Choose ye your need from Thames to Tweed
And I will choose instead
Such lands as lie 'twixt Rake and Rye,
Black Down and Beachy Head.

I will go out against the sun
Where the rolled scarp retires,
And the Long Man of Wilmington
Looks naked toward the shires ;
And east till doubling Rother crawls
To find the fickle tide,
By dry and sea-forgotten walls,
Our ports of stranded pride.

I will go north about the shaws
And the deep ghylls that breed
Huge oaks and old, the which we hold
No more than Sussex weed ;
shaws] woods. ghylls] glens.

Or south where windy Piddinghoe's
 Begilded dolphin veers,
And black beside wide-bankèd Ouse
 Lie down our Sussex steers.

So to the land our hearts we give
 Till the sure magic strike,
And Memory, Use, and Love make live
 Us and our fields alike—
That deeper than our speech and thought,
 Beyond our reason's sway,
Clay of the pit whence we were wrought
 Yearns to its fellow-clay.

*God gives all men all earth to love,
 But since man's heart is small,
Ordains for each one spot shall prove
 Belovèd over all.*

*Each to his choice, and I rejoice
 The lot has fallen to me
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—
 Yea, Sussex by the sea !*

RUDYARD KIPLING

At the Wars

Now that I am ta'en away,
And may not see another day,
What is it to my eye appears?
What sound rings in my stricken ears?
Not even the voice of any friend
Or eyes beloved-world-without-end,
But scenes and sounds of the countryside
In far England across the tide :

An upland field when Spring's begun,
Mellow beneath the evening sun. . . .
A circle of loose and lichen'd wall
Over which seven red pines fall. . . .
An orchard of wizen blossoming trees
Wherein the nesting chaffinches
Begin again the self-same song
All the late April day-time long. . . .
Paths that lead a shelving course
Between the chalk scarp and the gorse
By English downs ; and, O ! too well
I hear the hidden, clanking bell
Of wandering sheep . . . I see the brown
Twilight of the huge empty down. . . .
Soon blotted out ! for now a lane
Glitters with warmth of May-time rain,
And on a shooting briar I sec
A yellow bird who sings to me.

O yellow-hammer, once I heard
Thy yaffle when no other bird
Could to my sunk heart comfort bring ;
But now I would not have thee sing,
So sharp thy note is with the pain
Of England I may not see again !
Yet sing thy song : there answereth
Deep in me a voice which saith :
' *The gorse upon the twilit down,
The English loam so sunset brown,
The bowed pines and the sheep-bells' clamour,
The wet, lit lane and the yellow-hammer,*

yaffle] Here used of the yellow-hammer's note.

*The orchard and the chaffinch song,
Only to the Brave belong.
And he shall lose their joy for aye
If their price he cannot pay,
Who shall find them dearer far
Enriched by blood after long War.'*

ROBERT NICHOLS

The Soldier

IF I should die, think only this of me :

That there 's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed ;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,

A pulse in the eternal mind, no less

Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England
given ;

Her sights and sounds ; dreams happy as her day ;

And laughter, learnt of friends ; and gentleness,

In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

RUPERT BROOKE

Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries

THESE, in the day when heaven was falling,

The hour when earth's foundations fled,

Followed their mercenary calling

And took their wages and are dead.

Their shoulders held the sky suspended ;
They stood, and earth's foundations stay ;
What God abandoned, these defended,
And saved the sum of things for pay.

A. E. HOUSMAN

•For the Fallen

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill : Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old :
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again ;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home ;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time ;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night.

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

LAURENCE BINYON

The Song of the Ungirt Runners

WE swing ungirded hips,
And lightened are our eyes,
The rain is on our lips,
We do not run for prize.
We know not whom we trust
Nor whitherward we fare,
But we run because we must
Through the great wide air.

The waters of the seas
Are troubled as by storm.
The tempest strips the trees
And does not leave them warm.
Does the tearing tempest pause?
Do the tree-tops ask it why?
So we run without a cause
'Neath the big bare sky.

The rain is on our lips,
We do not run for prize.
But the storm the water whips
And the wave howls to the skies.
The winds arise and strike it
And scatter it like sand,
And we run because we like it
Through the broad bright land.

CHARLES HAMILTON SORLEY

•Everyone Sang

EVERYONE suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark green fields; on; on; and out of
sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted,
And beauty came like the setting sun.
My heart was shaken with tears and horror
Drifted away . . . O but every one
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the singing will
never be done.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

•Music

WHEN music sounds, gone is the earth I know,
And all her lovely things even lovelier grow;
Her flowers in vision flame, her forest trees
Lift burdened branches, stilled with ecstasies.

When music sounds, out of the water rise
Naiads whose beauty dims my waking eyes,
Rapt in strange dream burns each enchanted face,
With solemn echoing stirs their dwelling-place.

When music sounds, all that I was I am
Ere to this haunt of brooding dust I came;
And from Time's woods break into distant song
The swift-winged hours, as I hasten along.

WALTER DE LA MARE

-The Listeners

‘Is there anybody there?’ said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champ’d the grasses
Of the forest’s ferny floor;
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller’s head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
‘Is there anybody there?’ he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Lean’d over and look’d into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller’s call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
‘Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head:—
‘Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word,’ he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:

Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

WALTER DE LA MARE

Flannan Isle

‘THOUGH three men dwell on Flannan Isle
To keep the lamp alight,
As we steered under the lee, we caught
No glimmer through the night.’

A passing ship at dawn had brought
The news ; and quickly we set sail,
To find out what strange thing might ail
The keepers of the deep-sea light.

The Winter day broke blue and bright,
With glancing sun and glancing spray,
While o’er the swell our boat made way,
As gallant as a gull in flight.

But as we neared the lonely Isle,
And looked up at the naked height,
And saw the lighthouse towering white,
With blinded lantern, that all night
Had never shot a spark
Of comfort through the dark,
So ghostly in the cold sunlight
It seemed, that we were struck the while
With wonder all too dread for words.

And as into the tiny creek
We stole beneath the hanging crag,

We saw three queer, black, ugly birds—
Too big, by far, in my belief,
For cormorant or shag—
Like seamen sitting bolt-upright
Upon a half-tide reef :
But, as we neared, they plunged from sight,
Without a sound, or spurt of white.

And still too mazed to speak,
We landed ; and made fast the boat ;
And climbed the track in single file,
Each wishing he were safe afloat,
On any sea, however far,
So it be far from Flannan Isle :
And still we seemed to climb, and climb,
As though we'd lost all count of time,
And so must climb for evermore.
Yet, all too soon, we reached the door—
The black, sun-blistered lighthouse-door,
That gaped for us ajar.

As, on the threshold, for a spell,
We paused, we seemed to breathe the smell
Of limewash and of tar,
Familiar as our daily breath,
As though 'twere some strange scent of death :
And so, yet wondering, side by side,
We stood a moment, still tongue-tied :
And each with black foreboding eyed
The door, ere we should fling it wide,
To leave the sunlight for the gloom :
Till, plucking courage up, at last,
Hard on each other's heels we passed,
Into the living-room.

Yet, as we crowded through the door,
We only saw a table, spread
For dinner, meat and cheese and bread ;
But, all untouched ; and no one there :
As though, when they sat down to eat,
Ere they could even taste,
Alarm had come ; and they in haste
Had risen and left the bread and meat :
For at the table-head a chair
Lay tumbled on the floor.

We listened ; but we only heard
The feeble cheeping of a bird
That starved upon its perch :
And, listening still, without a word,
We set about our hopeless search.

We hunted high, we hunted low ;
And soon ransacked the empty house ;
Then o'er the Island, to and fro,
We ranged, to listen and to look
In every cranny, cleft or nook
That might have hid a bird or mouse :
But, though we searched from shore to shore,
We found no sign in any place :
And soon again stood face to face
Before the gaping door :
And stole into the room once more
As frightened children steal.

Ay : though we hunted high and low,
And hunted everywhere,
Of the three men's fate we found no trace
Of any kind in any place,
But a door ajar, and an untouched meal,
And an overtoppled chair.

And as we listened in the gloom
Of that forsaken living-room—
A chill clutch on our breath—
We thought how ill-chance came to all
Who kept the Flannan Light :
And how the rock had been the death
Of many a likely lad :
How six had come to a sudden end,
And three had gone stark mad :
And one whom we'd all known as friend
Had leapt from the lantern one still night,
And fallen dead by the lighthouse wall :
And long we thought
On the three we sought,
And of what might yet befall.

Like curs a glance has brought to heel,
We listened, flinching there :
And looked, and looked, on the untouched meal,
And the overtoppled chair.

We seemed to stand for an endless while,
Though still no word was said,
Three men alive on Flannan Isle,
Who thought on three men dead.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

Night-Errantry

THREE long breaths of the blessed night
And I am fast asleep ;
No need to read by candle-light
Or count a flock of sheep.

Deep, deep I lie as any dead,
Save my breath comes and goes ;
The holy dark is like a bed
With violet curtains close.

And while enfolded I lie there
Until the dawn of day,
My body is the prisoner,
My soul slips out to play.

A-tiptoe on the window-sill
He listens like a mouse,
The calling wind blows from the hill
And circles round the house.

Above the voices of the town
It whispers in the tree,
And brings the message of the Down :
'Tis there my soul would be.

Then while enchain'd my body lies
Like a dead man in grave,
Thither on trackless feet he hies,
On wings that make no wave.

The dawn comes out in cold gray sark
And finds him flitting there
Among the creatures of the dark,
Vixen and brock and hare.

O wild white face that 's none of mine,
O eager eyes unknown,
What will you do with Proserpine,
And what shall I, alone ?

brock] badger.

O flying feet, O naked sides,
O tresses flowing free,
And are you his that all day bides
So soberly in me?

The sun streams up behind the hill
And strikes the window-pane ;
The empty land lies hot and still,
And I am I again.

MAURICE HEWLETT

The Song of Honour

I CLIMBED a hill as light fell short,
And rooks came home in scramble sort,
And filled the trees and flapped and fought
And sang themselves to sleep ;
An owl from nowhere with no sound
Swung by and soon was nowhere found,
I heard him calling half-way round,
Holloing loud and deep ;
A pair of stars, faint pins of light,
Then many a star, sailed into sight,
And all the stars, the flower of night,
Were round me at a leap ;
To tell how still the valleys lay
I heard a watchdog miles away,
And bells of distant sheep.

I heard no more of bird or bell,
The mastiff in a slumber fell,
I stared into the sky,
As wondering men have always done
Since beauty and the stars were one,
Though none so hard as I.

It seemed, so still the valleys were,
As if the whole world knelt at prayer,
Save me and me alone ;
So pure and wide that silence was
I feared to bend a blade of grass,
And there I stood like stone.

There, sharp and sudden, there I heard—
Ab ! some wild lovesick singing bird
Woke singing in the trees ?
The nightingale and babble-wren
Were in the English greenwood then,
And you heard one of these ?

The babble-wren and nightingale
Sang in the Abyssinian vale
That season of the year !
Yet, true enough, I heard them plain,
I heard them both again, again,
As sharp and sweet and clear
As if the Abyssinian tree
Had thrust a bough across the sea,
Had thrust a bough across to me
With music for my ear !

I heard them both, and oh ! I heard
The song of every singing bird
That sings beneath the sky,
And with the song of lark and wren
The song of mountains, moths and men
And seas and rainbows vie !

I heard the universal choir,
The Sons of Light exalt their Sire

With universal song,
Earth's lowliest and loudest notes,
Her million times ten million throats
Exalt Him loud and long,
And lips and lungs and tongues of Grace
From every part and every place
Within the shining of His face,
The universal throng.

I heard the hymn of being sound
From every well of honour found
In human sense and soul :
The song of poets when they write
The testament of Beautysprite
Upon a flying scroll,
The song of painters when they take
A burning brush for Beauty's sake
And limn her features whole—

The song of men divinely wise
Who look and see in starry skies
Not stars so much as robins' eyes,
And when these pale away
Hear flocks of shiny pleiades
Among the plums and apple trees
Sing in the summer day—

The song of all both high and low
To some blest vision true,
The song of beggars when they throw
The crust of pity all men owe
To hungry sparrows in the snow,
Old beggars hungry too—
The song of kings of kingdoms when
They rise above their fortune Men,
And crown themselves anew—

The song of courage, heart and will
And gladness in a fight,
Of men who face a hopeless hill.
With sparking and delight,
The bells and bells of song that ring
Round banners of a cause or king
From armies bleeding white—

The song of sailors every one
When monstrous tide and tempest run
At ships like bulls at red,
When stately ships are twirled and spun
Like whipping tops and help there's none
And mighty ships ten thousand ton
Go down like lumps of lead—

And song of fighters stern as they
At odds with fortune night and day,
Crammed up in cities grim and grey
As thick as bees in hives,
Hosannas of a lowly throng
Who sing unconscious of their song,
Whose lips are in their lives—

And song of some at holy war
With spells and ghouls more dread by far
Than deadly seas and cities are
Or hordes of quarrelling kings—
The song of fighters great and small,
The song of pretty fighters all
And high heroic things—

The song of lovers—who knows how
Twitched up from place and time
Upon a sigh, a blush, a vow,

A curve or hue of cheek or brow,
Borne up and off from here and now
Into the void sublime !

And crying loves and passions still
In every key from soft to shrill
And numbers never done,
Dog-loyalties to faith and friend,
And loves like Ruth's of old no end,
And intermission none—

And burst on burst for beauty and
For numbers not behind,
From men whose love of motherland
Is like a dog's for one dear hand,
Sole, selfless, boundless, blind—
And song of some with hearts beside
For men and sorrows far and wide,
Who watch the world with pity and pride
And warm to all mankind—

And endless joyous music rise
From children at their play,
And endless soaring lullabies
From happy, happy mothers' eyes,
And answering crows and baby-cries,
How many who shall say !
And many a song as wondrous well
With pangs and sweets intolerable
From lonely hearths too grey to tell,
God knows how utter grey !
And song from many a house of care
When pain has forced a footing there
And there 's a Darkness on the stair
Will not be turned away—

And song—that song whose singers come
With old kind tales of pity from
The Great Compassion's lips,
That make the bells of Heaven to peal
Round pillows frosty with the feel
Of Death's cold finger tips—

The song of men all sorts and kinds,
As many tempers, moods and minds
As leaves are on a tree,
As many faiths and castes and creeds,
As many human bloods and breeds
As in the world may be ;

The song of each and all who gaze
On Beauty in her naked blaze,
Or see her dimly in a haze,
Or get her light in fitful rays
And tiniest needles even,
The song of all not wholly dark,
Not wholly sunk in stupor stark
Too deep for groping Heaven—

And alleluias sweet and clear
And wild with beauty men mishear,
From choirs of song as near and dear
To Paradise as they,
The everlasting pipe and flute
Of wind and sea and bird and brute,
And lips deaf men imagine mute
In wood and stone and clay :

The music of a lion strong
That shakes a hill a whole night long,

A hill as loud as he,
The twitter of a mouse among
Melodious greenery,
The ruby's and the rainbow's song,
The nightingale's—all three,
The song of life that wells and flows
From every leopard, lark and rose
And everything that gleams or goes
Lack-lustre in the sea.

I heard it all, each, every note
Of every lung and tongue and throat,
Ay, every rhythm and rhyme
Of everything that lives and loves
And upward, ever upward moves
From lowly to sublime !
Earth's multitudinous Sons of Light,
I heard them lift their lyric might
With each and every chanting sprite
That lit the sky that wondrous night
As far as eye could climb !

I heard it all, I heard the whole
Harmonious hymn of being roll
Up through the chapel of my soul
And at the altar die,
And in the awful quiet then
Myself I heard, Amen, Amen,
Amen I heard me cry !
I heard it all and then although
I caught my flying senses, Oh,
A dizzy man was I !

I stood and stared ; the sky was lit,
The sky was stars all over it,
I stood, I knew not why,
Without a wish, without a will,
I stood upon that silent hill
And stared into the sky until
My eyes were blind with stars and still
I stared into the sky.

RALPH HODGSON

Christ in the Universe

WITH this ambiguous earth
His dealings have been told us. These abide :
The signal to a maid, the human birth,
The lesson, and the young Man crucified.

But not a star of all
The innumerable host of stars has heard
How He administered this terrestrial ball.
Our race have kept their Lord's entrusted Word.

Of His earth-visiting feet
None knows the secret, cherished, perilous,
The terrible, shamefast, frightened, whispered, sweet,
Heart-shattering secret of His way with us.

No planet knows that this
Our wayside planet, carrying land and wave,
Love and life multiplied, and pain and bliss,
Bears, as chief treasure, one forsaken grave.

Nor, in our little day,
May His devices with the heavens be guessed,
His pilgrimage to thread the Milky Way
Or His bestowals there be manifest.

But in the eternities,
Doubtless we shall compare together, hear
A million alien Gospels, in what guise
He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear.

O, be prepared, my soul !
To read the inconceivable, to scan
The million forms of God those stars unroll
When, in our turn, we show to them a Man.

ALICE MEYNELL

The New Ghost

‘ And he casting away his garment rose and came to Jesus.’

AND he cast it down, down, on the green grass,
Over the young crocuses, where the dew was—
He cast the garment of his flesh that was full of death,
And like a sword his spirit showed out of the cold sheath.

He went a pace or two, he went to meet his Lord,
And, as I said, his spirit looked like a clean sword,
And seeing him the naked trees began shivering,
And all the birds cried out aloud as it were late spring.

And the Lord came on, He came down, and saw
That a soul was waiting there for Him, one without flaw,
And they embraced in the churchyard where the robins
play,
And the daffodils hang down their heads, as they burn
away.

The Lord held his head fast, and you could see
That He kissed the unsheathed ghost that was gone
free—

As a hot sun, on a March day, kisses the cold ground ;
And the spirit answered, for he knew well that his peace
was found.

The spirit trembled, and sprang up at the Lord's word—
As on a wild, April day, springs a small bird—
So the ghost's feet lifting him up, he kissed the Lord's
 cheek,
And for the greatness of their love neither of them could
 speak.

But the Lord went then, to show him the way,
Over the young crocuses, under the green may
That was not quite in flower yet—to a far-distant land ;
And the ghost followed, like a naked cloud holding the
 sun's hand.

FREDEGOND SHOVE

The Ballad of Father Gilligan

THE old priest Peter Gilligan
Was weary night and day ;
For half his flock were in their beds,
Or under green sods lay.

Once, while he nodded on a chair,
At the moth-hour of eve,
Another poor man sent for him,
And he began to grieve.

‘ I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,
‘ For people die and die ’ ;
And after cried he, ‘ God forgive !
‘ My body spake, not I ! ’

He knelt, and leaning on the chair
He prayed and fell asleep ;
And the moth-hour went from the fields,
And stars began to peep.

They slowly into millions grew,
And leaves shook in the wind ;
And God covered the world with shade,
And whispered to mankind.

Upon the time of sparrow chirp
When the moths came once more,
The old priest Peter Gilligan
Stood upright on the floor.

‘ Mavrone, mavrone ! the man has died,
‘ While I slept on the chair ’ ;
He roused his horse out of its sleep,
And rode with little care.

He rode now as he never rode,
By rocky lane and fen ;
The sick man’s wife opened the door :
‘ Father ! you come again ! ’

‘ And is the poor man dead ? ’ he cried.
‘ He died an hour ago,’
The old priest Peter Gilligan
In grief swayed to and fro.

‘ When you were gone, he turned and died
‘ As merry as a bird.’
The old priest Peter Gilligan
He knelt him at that word.

‘ He who hath made the night of stars
‘ For souls, who tire and bleed,
‘ Sent one of His great angels down
‘ To help me in my need.

‘ He who is wrapped in purple robes,
‘ With planets in His care,
‘ Had pity on the least of things
‘ Asleep upon a chair.’

W. B. YEATS

The Quietist

I DREAMED as dream the seraphim
Where God’s white roses grew.
Then, lest I caitiff were to Him,
I ran to draw and hew
With them that labour. So my guilt
Seemed over ; but askew
I clove the wood, and ever spilt
The water that I drew.
And bitter was my rue.

Then came the Master of Delight
And softly called for me :
‘ Be still, be still, mine acolyte !
My dreams are laid on thee.
It is enough, it is enough
To hearken and to see
The secret sweetest things of Love,
And waft felicity,—
Yea ! like a white rose-tree.’

RACHAEL ANNAND TAYLOR

'In no Strange Land'

'The Kingdom of God is within you.'

O WORLD invisible, we view thee,
O world intangible, we touch thee,
O world unknowable, we know thee,
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee !

Does the fish soar to find the ocean,
The eagle plunge to find the air—
That we ask of the stars in motion
If they have rumour of thee there ?

Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars !—
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places ;—
Turn but a stone, and start a wing !
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)
Cry ;—and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
Cry,—clinging Heaven by the hems ;
And lo, Christ walking on the water,
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames !

FRANCIS THOMPSON

Exspecto Resurrectionem

OH ! King who hast the key
Of that dark room,
The last which prisons us but held not Thee,
Thou know'st its gloom.
Dost Thou a little love this one
Shut in to-night,
Young and so piteously alone,
Cold—out of sight ?
Thou know'st how hard and bare
The pillow of that new-made narrow bed,
Then leave not there
So dear a head !

CHARLOTTE MEW

Dominus Illuminatio Mea

IN the hour of death, after this life's whim,
When the heart beats low, and the eyes grow dim,
And pain has exhausted every limb—
The lover of the Lord shall trust in Him.
When the will has forgotten the lifelong aim,
And the mind can only disgrace its fame,
And a man is uncertain of his own name—
The power of the Lord shall fill this frame.
When the last sigh is heaved, and the last tear shed,
And the coffin is waiting beside the bed,
And the widow and child forsake the dead—
The angel of the Lord shall lift this head.
For even the purest delight may pall,
And power must fail, and the pride must fall,
And the love of the dearest friends grow small—
But the glory of the Lord is all in all.

R. D. BLACKMORE

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